

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

February 4, 2026

Honorable Jørgen Watne Frydnes
Chair
Nobel Peace Prize Committee
Henrik Ibsen Gate 51, NO-0255
Oslo, Norway

Dear Honorable Frydnes and Members of the Nobel Peace Prize Committee:

We respectfully nominate Jimmy Lai, Ilham Tohti, Ezra Jin Mingri, Benny Tai, Joshua Wong, and Wang Yi to receive the 2026 Nobel Peace Prize in recognition of their enduring, nonviolent commitment to peace, human rights, and human dignity in the face of sustained repression by the Chinese Communist Party. Each of these individuals has paid an extraordinary personal price—through imprisonment, persecution, or prolonged legal harassment—for exercising rights guaranteed by international law and for advocating a more peaceful and just future in China and Hong Kong.

Yours is a difficult task. Across the world, many brave individuals are working for peace and justice. Awarding the Nobel Peace Prize to these courageous advocates from China, however, would do more than honor their sacrifice—it would apply a universal principle directly to the regime that poses the greatest threat to its realization. Such an award would demonstrate that the People's Republic of China is no exception to this truth: the desire for freedom, conscience, and peaceful self-determination among its people is no different from that shared by billions around the world.

Ilham Tohti: Uyghur scholar Ilham Tohti exemplifies the Nobel Peace Prize's highest ideals: principled, nonviolent leadership anchored in human dignity, equal rights, and the rule of law. As a professor at Minzu University in Beijing, he consistently rejected extremism and instead urged lawful protections for ethnic autonomy, an end to discrimination, and genuine interethnic dialogue—including through Uyghur Online, which he founded to foster understanding between Uyghurs and Han Chinese. For advancing these peaceful ideas, he was detained in 2014, accused of “separatism,” and sentenced to life in prison following proceedings widely condemned for serious procedural violations. Ilham Tohti’s enduring message—that “only peace and goodwill can create a common interest”—is a direct repudiation of hatred and coercion employed by the Chinese government to target Uyghurs and other ethnic minorities in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region. His work is the embodiment of the noble ideal that lasting peace is impossible without human rights, justice, and equality before the law.

Jimmy Lai: Jimmy Lai Chee-ying, founder of the now-shuttered Apple Daily, is a global symbol of nonviolent resistance to totalitarianism and of the indispensable role a free press plays in preserving peace, democracy, and the rule of law. Arrested on August 10, 2020, Hong Kong authorities accused Mr. Lai of “collusion with a foreign country or with external elements to endanger national security” under the National Security Law and of “conspiracy to defraud,” charges widely viewed as retaliation for independent journalism and peaceful advocacy. Held in solitary pretrial detention since December 2020 and denied counsel of his own choosing, Mr. Lai

has endured harsh custodial conditions—including prolonged solitary confinement, restricted exercise and daylight, and limited access to independent medical care—that pose grave dangers to his health. After repeated delays, he was found guilty in December 2025 and is awaiting sentencing. Mr. Lai has consistently rejected the allegations against him, stating that Hong Kongers are defending guaranteed freedoms against the PRC government’s encroachment on the city’s autonomy—an insistence on rights and lawful self-government that is foundational to any durable peace.

Ezra Jin Mingri: Pastor Ezra Jin (also known as Jin Mingri) advances peace in China by building and sustaining a community of conscience rooted in nonviolence, mutual care, and service. As founder of Zion Church, one of China’s largest independent Christian networks—serving more than 10,000 participants across 40 cities—he has shown how civil society can strengthen social trust and human dignity under autocratic pressure. After authorities seized the church’s property in 2018, he pioneered a decentralized online-offline model that helped the church endure and grow through harsh COVID-19 lockdowns. On October 10, 2025, he was arrested alongside nearly 30 other church leaders and now faces charges for peaceful organizing and expressing religious teachings online. Pastor Jin exemplifies the moral courage the Nobel Peace Prize exists to honor.

Benny Tai: Benny Tai Yiu-ting, a former law professor at the University of Hong Kong, is a leading advocate of nonviolent civic participation and democratic self-government. He was an architect of the 2014 Umbrella Movement, urging peaceful public deliberation as Hong Kongers demanded genuine electoral reform and universal suffrage in response to Beijing’s decision to pre-screen candidates for chief executive. After weeks of peaceful protest involving thousands of citizens, he was later convicted of a public nuisance offense and dismissed from HKU—an early signal that principled dissent would be punished. In 2020, Tai helped organize a peaceful, legal, non-binding primary election to improve coordination among pro-democracy candidates seeking to win a Legislative Council majority. Authorities treated the exercise as a threat, conducting a sweeping crackdown that resulted in the arrest of more than 50 people. In November 2024, Tai received a harsh ten-year prison sentence—an unmistakable message that peaceful political organizing and lawful electoral participation would be criminalized.

Joshua Wong: Joshua Wong Chi-fung is among Hong Kong’s most prominent symbols of principled, nonviolent civic leadership. He founded the student group Scholarism at age 14 and helped successfully mobilize peaceful protests in 2012 to halt a pro-Beijing “Moral and National Education” curriculum. He later emerged as a leading student voice during the 2014 Umbrella Movement, where he was imprisoned for refusing to leave the protest site. After his release in June 2019, Wong again advocated peaceful protest—this time opposing proposed legislation that would have enabled extraditions from Hong Kong to mainland China. He is now imprisoned on multiple convictions, including a four-year, eight-month sentence tied to the 2020 primary election, as well as “unauthorized assembly” convictions connected to the 2019 protests. He also faces an additional national security charge based on allegations that he sought foreign sanctions. Wong’s case illustrates the criminalization of peaceful participation and the systematic dismantling of civic space—precisely the conditions under which the Nobel Peace Prize can elevate nonviolent courage and reaffirm the universal rights that make lasting peace possible.

Wang Yi: Protestant Pastor Wang Yi represents the peaceful defense of freedom of religion and conscience—a cornerstone of any durable peace. As the founder and pastor of the Early Rain Covenant Church in Chengdu, he led a thriving faith community committed to public service, moral responsibility, and nonviolent civic engagement. In December 2018, Pastor Wang was detained in the course of a broader crackdown on independent churches and later convicted on charges including “inciting subversion of state power.” Pastor Wang’s steadfast insistence that faith communities must be free to worship, speak, and organize peacefully—without coercion or political conformity—has made him a symbol of principled nonviolence in the face of repression. The U.N. Working Group on Arbitrary Detention has determined that his detention was arbitrary, reinforcing the international human rights implications of his case.

We urge the Committee to recognize these nominees as exemplars of nonviolent courage and moral clarity. Their lives and work reflect the Nobel Peace Prize’s highest purpose.

Over the past several years, Members of the U.S. Congress have nominated brave advocates in China who have put their lives and liberty on the line for universal rights—human rights lawyers Ding Jiaxi and Xu Zhiyong, journalist and women’s rights advocate Sophia Huang Xueqin, democracy advocate Peng Lifa, lawyer and rights advocate Chow Hang-tung, and anti-censorship campaigner Li Kangmeng—all of whom remain arbitrarily detained or disappeared and merit global recognition for the sacrifices they have made for peace and freedom.

It has been 15 years since the Committee awarded the Peace Prize to Liu Xiaobo. In that time, the Chinese Communist Party has perpetrated grave abuses and atrocities in China and in Hong Kong, while employing an ever more sophisticated system of repression to silence the very people who stand for peaceful change and fundamental freedoms. It is past time for the Committee to honor a new generation of individuals who, at tremendous personal cost, insist that peace requires human rights, free expression, equal justice under law, and respect for conscience.

Best,



Christopher H. Smith
U.S. Representative



John Moolenaar
U.S. Representative



James P. McGovern
U.S. Representative



Joe Wilson
U.S. Representative



Thomas R. Suozzi
U.S. Representative